



Free e-News from your Hayward Fire Department-

Pet Disaster Preparedness

Emergencies come in many forms, and they may require anything from a brief absence from your home to permanent evacuation. Each type of disaster requires different measures to keep your pets safe. The best thing you can do for yourself and your pets is to be prepared.

When animals are evacuated from the familiar surroundings of their homes during an emergency, they often experience stress and fear and can be exposed to diseases from other animals. Put safety first. If you are in an unfamiliar place, especially a hotel or large evacuation shelter, you will encounter many animals, people and children who may have varied experience with animals. Animals can be easily frightened in stressful situations and may become aggressive or defensive. Keep your pet restrained in a carrier or crate or on a leash at all times and avoid having your pet come in direct contact with other pets when possible.

Watch for signs of illness. Stress or eating different food can cause diarrhea in pets, especially dogs. If your dog is experiencing loose stools, make sure that fresh water is available at all times. Take dogs out for frequent, short walks. If their normal food is unavailable, supplement their food with white rice and cottage cheese. If the problem persists, consult a veterinarian.

Follow these tips and make an emergency plan for your pets:

1. Identification

Keep a collar and tag on all cats and dogs. Put a temporary identification tag on your pet. If you are staying at a shelter, hotel or other temporary site, a temporary identification tag with your current location information and a cell phone number or other number where you can be reached will help you find your pet if you get separated.

Many agencies recommend micro-chipping your pet as a more permanent form of identification. A microchip is implanted in the animal's shoulder area, and can be read by scanner at most animal shelters. Identification on indoor-only cats is especially important. If your home is damaged during a disaster, they could easily escape.

Microchip identification is one of the best ways to ensure that you and your pet are reunited if you are separated. Be sure to keep the microchip registration up-to-date, and include at least one emergency number of a friend or relative who resides out of your immediate area. Keep current pictures of your pet in case he or she gets lost and you need to prove ownership or print posters should you get separated.

2. Plan a safe pet-friendly place to stay

Arrange a safe haven for your pets in the event of evacuation. Remember, if it isn't safe for you, it isn't safe for your pets. They may become trapped or escape and be exposed to numerous life-threatening hazards. Red Cross disaster shelters will not accept pets because of health and safety regulations, so it is imperative that you have determined where you will bring your pets ahead of time. Search in advance for out of the area pet-friendly hotels or boarding facilities, or make a housing exchange agreement with an out-of-area friend or relative. If you must evacuate your home in a crisis, plan for the worst-case scenario.

If you think you may be gone for only a day, assume that you may not be allowed to return for several weeks. When recommendations for evacuation have been announced, follow the instructions of local and state officials. Never leave your pet behind if you evacuate!

Search for pet-friendly accommodations at:

[Pet Friendly Hotels](http://www.pet-friendly-hotels.net/) or paste into your browser: <http://www.pet-friendly-hotels.net/>

3. Use the buddy system

Exchange pet information, evacuation plans and house keys with a few trusted neighbors or nearby friends. If you're caught outside evacuation lines when an evacuation order is issued, your neighbors or friends can evacuate your pets for you.

4. Prepare an emergency kit for each animal

A one-week supply of the food your pet is accustomed to eating. Store food in an airtight, waterproof container and rotate every three months (dry food should be rotated every two months) to ensure freshness. If your pet eats canned food, buy cans small enough for one feeding since you may not be able to refrigerate leftovers. Include a multi-tool/can opener or buy pop-top cans.

Store a one week supply of fresh water in a cool, dark location. Rotate water every 6 months to ensure freshness. Remember, if tap water is not suitable for humans to drink during a disaster, it won't be suitable for your pets to drink. Include bowls for food and water. Collapsible bowls are easy to store and save space. Access to a supply of fresh water is particularly important. In areas that may lose electricity, fill up bathtubs and sinks ahead of time to ensure that you have access to water during a power outage or other crises.

Stock up on the items you may need during a disaster now so you do not get caught unprepared. Listed are basic items you should include in your pets' disaster kits. Store your disaster kit supplies in an easy-to-grab container.

- Copies of vaccination records (flash-drive storage)
- Photographs of you with your pets to prove ownership
- Photographs of your pets in case you need to make "lost pet" fliers
- Pet first aid kit
- Contact list of pet-friendly hotels, veterinarians, American Red Cross, American Humane Association and out-of-town friends/family

If you've evacuated, use a temporary ID tag to record your temporary contact information and/or the phone number of an unaffected friend or relative. Identify emergency veterinary facilities outside of your immediate area.

If a disaster has affected your community, emergency veterinary facilities may be closed. Pets may become injured or ill during the disaster, so make sure you know how to access other emergency facilities. You can also check with your veterinarian to find out if they have an emergency plan that includes setting up in an alternate, emergency facility.

5. Place an emergency decal on your front window or door

If disaster strikes while you are not home, an appropriate decal will alert rescuers of the animals inside. An emergency window decal can be ordered online or picked up at Hayward City Hall from the [Emergency Services Office](#). Make sure it is visible to rescue workers, and that it includes:

- The types and number of pets in your household
- Your emergency temporary caregiver number and,
- Your veterinarian's phone number

If you must evacuate with your pets, and if time allows, write "EVACUATED" across the window sticker or remove from the window.

6. Housing and Transportation

Physical structures, like walls, fences and barns may be destroyed during a disaster. Have a plan for keeping your animal safely confined. You may need a tie-out, crate or kennel. Collar and leash (preferably at least six feet long) in case you have to keep your pet confined in a cage for an extended period of time and need a secure way to remove him from the carrier for exercise. The carrier should be large enough for your dog to lie down comfortably; and to accommodate food and water dishes (and a litter box for a cat).

7. Comfort your animals

Comfort your pet. Give your pets extra reassurance and attention to help keep them calm. Often, when animals are evacuated to unfamiliar locations, their stress and fear can lead to illness injury. Your animals will appreciate your calm presence and soft, comforting voice if they are stressed following a disaster or while evacuated, and you will find it comforting to spend time with them too, during a disaster. Some animals, especially cats, may be too scared to be comforted. Interact with them on their terms. Some animals may find toys, especially long-lasting chew toys, comforting.

8. Know where to search for lost animals

When animals become lost during a disaster, they often end up at a local pet shelter. Keep handy the locations and phone numbers of any shelters in your area.

9. Cleaning and Sanitation

Pooper scooper, one-week supply of cat litter, a small litter box, and plastic bags or other means of disposing of your pets waste. You will also need liquid soap for washing food and water bowls, paper towels and disinfectant for cleaning crates and carriers.

10. Health and Safety

If your animal takes medication, a replacement supply may not be easily available following a disaster. A waterproof container with a two-week supply of any medications your pet is taking is needed. Medical records, including copies of vaccination records can be kept on a flash-drive.

It's also important to think about a first aid book specific to your pet and a pet-specific first aid or pet kit, include:

Conforming bandage (3" x 5")	Absorbent gauze pads (4" x 4")
Absorbent gauze roll (3" x 1 yard)	Pet carrier
Antiseptic wipes (1 package)	Emollient cream (1 container)
Tweezers and scissors	Cotton tipped applicators (1 small box)
Latex disposable gloves (several pairs)	Paper towels
Medications your pet needs	Instant cold pack
Proper fitting muzzle (for dogs) even if they are mild temperament	

If emergency officials recommend that you stay in your home, it's crucial that you keep your pets with you. In the event of flooding, go to the highest location in your home, or a room that has

access to counters or high shelves where your animals can take shelter. Keep your emergency kit and supplies close at hand. Your pets may become stressed during the in-house confinement, so you may consider crating them for safety and comfort.

11. Temporary Caregiver

This step will take considerable time and thought. When choosing a designated caregiver, consider someone who lives close to your residence. He or she should be someone who is generally home during the day while you are at work or has easy access to your home. A set of keys should be given to this trusted individual. This may work well with neighbors who have pets of their own—you may even swap responsibilities, depending upon who has accessibility.

When selecting a permanent caregiver, you'll need to consider other criteria. This is a person to whom you are entrusting the care of your pet in the event that something should happen to you. When selecting this "foster parent," consider people who have met your pet and have successfully cared for animals in the past. Be sure to discuss your expectations at length with a permanent caregiver, so he or she understands the responsibility of caring for your pet.

Planning ahead is the key to keeping yourself and your pet's safe if disaster strikes. If you find you are unable to care for your pet because of destruction of or damage to your residence. Relief Grants are offered to assist pet owners with vet care, temporary boarding and transportation. Learn more at www.redrover.org or call (916) 429-2457.

For more information on Pet Disaster Preparedness and safety related materials, please see our website at: www.hayward-ca.gov click on the red "Disaster Preparedness" button or contact the Hayward Fire Department [Emergency Services Office](#) for additional information at (510) 583-4948.